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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN IDENTITY

Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies gave extensive coverage on November 4 to President Chen Shui-bian's decision to withdraw two honorary medals awarded to former Presidential Office Deputy Secretary-General Chen Chen-nan due to his inappropriate appointment of an accountant in the Presidential Office to deal with his own personal finances. Coverage also focused on other alleged scandals involving two high-ranking finance officials and the aftermath of the Government Information Office's probe into the ownership structure of TVBS, a local station whose talk show programs tend to be critical of the ruling DPP government. The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily," however, is the only Chinese-language newspaper that reported on its front page President Chen's remarks on Tuesday that he will focus on four core issues during the rest of his term to promote Taiwan's position in the international community. An editorial in the newspaper also discussed Chen's four major policy objectives, urging the government to replace the national title of "Republic of China" with "Taiwan" in an attempt to help the island walk out of its current diplomatic predicament. End summary.

"[The Government Should] Strive to Enhance the Island's Participation in the International Community In the Name of Taiwan, Which Shall Replace the Useless [Name of] Republic of China, in an Attempt to Walk out of the Diplomatic Predicament It Is In."

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] asserted in an editorial (11/4):

"President Chen Shui-bian, when receiving a visiting delegation from the North American Taiwanese Medical Association on Thursday, said he will focus on four core issues during the rest of his term: "expanding [Taiwan's] participation in the international community," "constructing political order," "improving public welfare," and "defending security and peace." Chen said he hopes Taiwan can use its assets in trade, democracy, humanitarianism, and security to participate more actively in the international community. .

"Just as Chen stated on Thursday, Taiwan's `love for democracy and honor for human rights' is a very important cornerstone for the island's democratic development. We need to cherish this democratic achievement, which did not come about easily. Likewise, since the [name of] Republic of China has turned out to be a burden and negative point for Taiwan's foreign relations, we need to educate our younger generations that the [name of] Republic of China is not conducive to winning international recognition and that the Republic of China is thus [considered] dead; we must make sure that they have no confusion about their national identity. Internationally, we should start from scratch by using the [national] title of Taiwan to play a more proactive role in participating in international activities and organizations involved in economics, trade, relief, public health, environmental protection, culture, science and technology. Taiwan needs to raise its visibility in the international community via substantive means of diplomacy, seek to improve its foreign relations, and walk out of the diplomatic predicament it is currently in."

KEEGAN